

FACT SHEET:

THE EMPLOYMENT OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

FINDINGS

- 31.1 million working-age (15-64) people with disabilities of which employment can be clearly ruled out for only about 160,000 based on Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) Data
- the employment rate for people with non-severe disabilities is 74% and 75% among people without disabilities
- the employment rate for people with severe disabilities is 25%
- if the employment rate of people with disabilities were equal to the nondisability level an additional 7.1-7.5 million people with disabilities would be employed
- The unemployment rate of people with disabilities increases the overall unemployment rate by about 0.6 points
- Average household and personal income levels are lower among people with disabilities of whom nearly 1/5th live in poverty status.
- Close to 1/6th of people with disabilities receive Social Security income and close to 1/6th receive some form of means-tested income (principally SSI).
- The mean monthly household income was reported to be \$2,962 and the median is \$2,314 equal to 73% and 67% of the mean and median levels for people without disabilities. The mean and median levels for people with severe disabilities was 58% and 51% of the mean and median levels for people without disabilities. (MN = 4,058 Md=3,454)
- Health insurance coverage rates are only slightly lower among people with disabilities than among people without disabilities, and differ very little between employed and non-employed people with disabilities, with most of the latter group covered by Medicaid or Medicare.
- Health care utilization (hospital and doctor's office visits) is higher among people with disabilities, particularly non-employed people with disabilities.
- Employed people with disabilities work fewer hours on average, are more likely to be self-employed, and are more likely to be covered by unions and be in blue-collar occupations than emptied people with out disabilities

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- Employed people with disabilities earn 12% less per hour and 20% less per month than otherwise-similar employed people without disabilities.
- People without disabilities have completed an average of 12.9 years of education, compared to only 11.8 among people with disabilities.
- of people without disabilities age 25 and older have completed 12 or more years of education, while only 60% of people with disabilities age 25 and older have completed 12 or more years of education.
- People with disabilities are almost 3 times more likely than people without disabilities to have completed 16 or more years of education (22% compared to 8%).

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Harris Survey of Employers of Persons with Disabilities

Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (July 7, 1995). *The N.O.D./Harris survey on employment of people with disabilities*. NY: Author.

Findings for 1996 indicate that:

- 92% indicated that discomfort and uneasiness on the part of supervisors and employees was NOT an important reason for NOT hiring a person with a disability; 4% were not sure; 4% reported it as an important reason
- 73% perceive people with disabilities as an underused human resource
- 89% of employers say that their employees would support policies to increase the number of people with disabilities in their companies
- 76% of corporate managers describe the performance of employees with disabilities as pretty good (59%) or excellent (17%). Very few gave employees with disabilities negative marks including ratings of fair (3%) or poor (0%).
- 82% of corporate managers reported overall job performance of employees with disabilities as about the same as employees without disabilities, 6% as better, 2% as worse and 9% as not sure.
- 48% reported costs to accommodate people with disabilities had increased "a little" as a result of ADA while 32% reported "no change at all". 7% reported their costs had increased a lot.
- The most frequently cited accommodations made were 1) removing architectural barriers or changing furniture to give employees with disabilities full access (83%); 2) adjusted work hours or restructured jobs to accommodate employees with disabilities (60%); 3) purchased any special telephones or equipment to help employees with disabilities (56%); and 4) provided readers or interpreters to help blind or speech and hearing impaired employees (22%).
- Only 27% of companies reported that the average cost of employing a person with a disability is greater than employing a person without a disability. Among those who could provide figures the median cost per employee for accommodation was \$233. (small companies = \$175; medium = \$213; large = \$454).

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- The major reasons that accommodations have not been made in the workplace is that either none were needed (80%) or not were requested (11%) of corporate managers say they are likely to make greater efforts to hire people with disabilities in the next 3 years
- Almost all (98%) said there would be at least the same or more opportunities for employment of people with disabilities; no one said that opportunities would lessen.

10 Reasons Why Employers Should be Involved with School-to-Work and the Employment of People with Disabilities

1. You have jobs, we have people that want to work
2. People with disabilities are an underutilized human resource.
3. Connecting to schools provides employers influence for promoting the skill development necessary to succeed in the workplace.
4. Businesses build community relationships through connections to schools and programs.
5. Businesses assume a leadership role in their community and promote the leadership of others through involvement in School-to-Work.
6. Workplaces provide learning environments, experiences, and opportunities that cannot be simulated in classrooms or school-buildings.
7. Businesses can help students understand the importance of their learning through work-based activities connected to school-based curricula.
8. Employers and employees provide exemplars of productivity and citizenship; employers and employees can become mentors and apprentice masters.
9. Connections between business, schools and other community service agencies provides opportunities for sharing knowledge, information and technology among employers, educators, program developers, employment trainers and consultants and students.
10. Students and family members are paying customers.